

VZCZCXRO0617
PP RUEH DU RUEHGI RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEH KI #1499 2691318
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 261318Z SEP 06
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4856
INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

UNCLAS KINSHASA 001499

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [CG](#)
SUBJECT: CONGO'S NEW NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BEGINS WORK

¶1. (U) DR Congo's newly-elected National Assembly met for the first time September 22 in Kinshasa. Of the 500 deputies elected on July 29, 438 participated in the largely ceremonial session. The pro-forma selection of its provisional bureau was the Assembly's sole order of business.

¶2. (U) Joseph Mbenza Thubi of Kinshasa was selected as the bureau's president, and Juliette Mbambu Mughole of North Kivu and Dany Banza Maloba of Katanga as secretaries. The new DRC constitution stipulates that the provisional bureau is to be headed by the oldest deputy and assisted by the two youngest. Thubi, 75, represents one of Kinshasa's four electoral districts and is a member of the Congolese Alliance of Christian Democrats. Mbambu, 27, is from North Kivu's Lubero district and is a member of the People's Union for the Republic and Complete Integration. Banza, 29, is an independent from the city of Likasi in Katanga.

¶3. (SBU) The National Assembly's immediate tasks are to validate the mandates of its members and adopt internal rules. It met in closed session September 25 to organize ad hoc commissions to examine and validate mandates. The work of these commissions may be delayed as the dossiers of some parliamentarians have not yet been received.
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